

Groundbreaking Marks Start of Pajaro River Flood Protection Project

October 3, 2024



State and federal partners celebrated the groundbreaking of a critical flood risk management project for the City of Watsonville, Town of Pajaro, and surrounding agricultural areas. This project will provide 100-year flood protection to these vulnerable communities.

Governor Gavin Newsom has been instrumental in advancing this project, providing advanced funding, covering 100 percent of non-federal costs, and streamlining environmental review. The project is a collaboration between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency.

““This urgent work underway is critical to protecting vulnerable communities that have faced the threat of devastating flooding for far too long. California is strengthening flood protections in at-risk communities across the state, a key priority as we continue to experience extreme weather. I’m grateful for the partnership of our legislators and federal and local leaders who have worked together to advance this project,” said Governor Gavin Newsom.

The existing levees in the area were built decades ago and offer only eight years of flood protection. The new project will significantly enhance flood resilience.

The Governor has invested a total of \$560 million over the past two state budgets to support flood response and protection projects. This includes \$125 million for at-risk communities.

Key Actions to Protect Pajaro Valley Communities:

- **AB 876:** Signed by Speaker Robert Rivas, this legislation streamlines environmental review for the project.
- **Advanced Funding:** The Governor authorized advanced payments for early-stage work on the project.
- **100% Non-Federal Cost Coverage:** The Governor signed legislation to cover up to 100% of non-federal costs.
- **Community Relief:** The state provided \$40 million to Pajaro and Planada for flood relief in summer 2023.

The project is expected to significantly reduce flood risk in the region and provide long-term protection for vulnerable communities.